

National Catholic Theatre Conference

PRODUCTION CALENDAR

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1947 BSA CONTEST JUDGES

The Conference is again fortunate in enlisting the aid of three authoritative judges for the selection of the 1947 Bishop Sheil Drama Award winner.

Walter Kerr, playwright, teacher of playwriting, and director of many first productions, has had more opportunity than most to become an experienced judge of new plays.

Jane Wyatt and Leo Carroll, expert actors, are constantly faced with the problem of knowing a good play. Their reputation has been built by saying no to parts in poor plays.

Confident that the good taste and professional vision of the judges will find the best play, NCTC is sitting back just waiting for the entries to arrive.

Deadline: May 1, 1947.

SUMMER THEATRE 1947

Before the Executive Board meets next month it will be important for us to have on record your reaction to the Summer Production Centre proposed in the Mid-Summer Calendar. Some groups have already indicated their intention to participate, but possibly it escaped the attention of others.

Will you please write us this month if members of your group would attend a 2, 3, or 4 week session (indicating preference)? How many? What time suits best? Attend at their own expense or at expense of group as an award for superlative talent and cooperation?

Proposed theatre would concentrate on development of skills in actual production. Interest of designers, stagehands and actors are a requisite of success.

More and more frequently we hear of regular weekly or monthly broadcasts by Conference group members - some by direct connection at the school, some from local city stations.

Rev. John H. Kelly, S.J., in two years with the Radio Playshop of Fairfield College Preparatory School has solved the problem of lack of rehearsal time and the too-busy-ness of Bridgeport station staffs by transcribing programs at Fairfield under his own manufactured conditions for broadcast on playback at the studio.

Father Kelly estimates that the equipment up to this point, counting a substantial stock of discs, needles, etc., has cost about \$775. The total might be reduced by using smaller than 16" discs, but nothing smaller will cover a 15 min. program. Actually for a half-hour program, two cutting tables are required, and Fairfield is looking for its 2d now.

Present equipment in the Playshop includes: 1 Presto Recording Turntable (75A), 1 Presto Recording Amplifier (87B) 1 Shure Microphone (55C)-stand type, 1 Turner crystal microphone, table stand, (S36A), stock of stellite and sapphire cutting and playing needles, discs varying from 6" to 16", and 1 sound turntable (made by Father Langguth, S.J.).

With his Jesuit Martyr scripts currently aired by Boston (Boston College producing), Bridgeport, Hartford, Waterbury, Stamford and New Haven, Father Kelly is accumulating sales experience too.

From a neighboring public high school teacher we hear that the radio program has achieved as well as motivated excellent speech among Playshop members.

PUBLISHERS' NOTES

OUR HEARTS WERE YOUNG AND GAY was definitely promised by Dramatic Publishing Company for Oct. 28 release. The library will have several copies, which will be put into circulation the day they arrive and kept moving as quickly as borrowers return them to us.

TEN LITTLE INDIANS is available in galley proof only until December 1; 75¢. Samuel French. Copy in library.

TGBIAS AND THE ANGEL has been withdrawn from amateur market pending Broadway production this year (S. French).

Cameo Players at Immaculate Conception Academy, Davenport, have been busy from the first day of school. Rev. F.E. Marlin, Executive Board Member, addressed the Players at the installation of 16 new National Thespian members Sept. 25; Mission Carnival program was highlighted by the Senior ROARING 20'S REVIEW; Juniors provided an Iowa Centennial program and the Annual Mother Clarke celebration October 4.

Loras College Players, Dramatic Club of Aquinas High School, and St. Catherine's H.S. Players are scheduled to produce CYRANO the same week in February. The directors are working toward staggered performances so they may view the other productions.

The Mime and Interp Club, Mrs. L. G. Bujarski, Director, Sacred Heart Academy Wichita, offers a monthly all-school assembly program comprising a 1-act play, novelty feature and quiz program - all student directed, acted, and sometimes written.

Last month for the first of a series of 1-act play nights, Cap and Bells, St. Joseph's College, Philadelphia, offered THE TELLTALE HEART, THE LOST SILK HAT, and IN THE ZONE. Rev. Gerald Kernan, S. J., is at work on a new tragedy for production in December.

A CHALLENGE ACCEPTED, produced on the stage at Mt. Carmel Academy Oct 4 to honor Mother Mary Frances Clarke, B.V.M. Founder, was broadcast Oct 27 via KFH.

You will visit the Service Bureau, we hope, on your next trip to New York. Although our Secretary will be on regular office hours every day this season, Conference business takes her away from the office occasionally. If you can let her know in advance of your call, it will happily prevent conflicts.

And because you will undoubtedly wish to see plays while here, may we suggest that you write far in advance to the Box Office of the show you wish to see. The theatre will give your mail order much kinder attention than we can receive from a window-weary clerk when the line is long. If you cannot hope for tickets at box office prices (usually \$1.80, 2.40 3.60, 4.80 and 6.00), Mr. John McBride of McBride Theatre Ticket Co., 1493 Broadway, has promised to do his best for Conference members at the regular broker's fee.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY

Pittsburgh settled its power strike in time to allow Catholic Theatre Guild to celebrate a special Tenth Anniversary Day Oct. 27. The membership attended Mass and received Communion at St. Paul's Cathedral, had breakfast at Hotel Schenley, and held open house from two to five p.m. with an informal entertainment program. Our warmest congratulations to this ambitious community group which has worked consistently for better theatre.

NORTHERN KENTUCKY

Bernard Brungs, President of Catholic Theatre Guild of Northern Kentucky, like several heads of newly registered Conference groups, has taken considerable trouble to give us a record of past achievements of the Guild. We hope to have space each month to introduce one or more new members to you.

Although the Guild resumed dramatic productions only last Christmas (HOLY NIGHT) after a wartime furlough, it has an enviable list of accomplishments to its credit: in addition to several Gilbert and Sullivan operettas and the first full-length production of KAMIANO, the players, gathered from neighboring communities, have made their own dramatization of THE BOOK OF TUBIAS, a musical adaptation of PINNOCHIO by Colloidi, and presented a choral version of EVERYMAN (with the stage set in St. Mary's Cathedral Close under the huge stained glass window on which spots were thrown from inside) in the manner of the Grail Guild production in London. The Guild also conducts an extensive social program.

Monsignor Walter A. Freiberg is the helpful Moderator, and professional music and drama directors have from the outset served the Guild.

SUMMER SCENE

A new play for high schools, SUMMER SCENE, was given a test production by the Young American Repertory Group under Felix Herlinger's direction at Cherry Lane Theatre Oct 21--27. Samuel French will publish this month. 5 girls (14-17) and 3 boys. Set in New Mexico.

BROADWAY COMMENTS

by Mrs. Christopher Wyatt

A FLAG IS BORN - Zionist propaganda in a pageant written by Ben Hecht. Sometimes highly dramatic and touching, particularly when Muni was in the cast. Well staged and lighted.

CYRANO DE BERGERAC - Very fine and lively revival with Jose Ferrer fighting such a duel as has not been seen since Fairbanks' day. Lemuel Ayers' sets and costumes are not superlative, but cast and direction are excellent. Highly recommended.

GYPSY LADY - Combination of two Victor Herbert operettas offered by producer of SONG OF NORWAY. Fine sets, costumes, well-trained chorus, and amusing comedy. Nothing original but very pleasing as a whole.

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN - Cecil Beaton's decor together with an attractive cast reanimate this genre drawing room comedy with wit and at moments humanity. Penelope Ward is outstanding as Lady Windermere; Cornelia Otis Skinner, adequate as Mrs. Erlynne. The best antidote to THE ICEMAN COMETH.

DUCHESS OF MALFI - Elizabeth Bergner is able to put life and pathos into the Duchess. Her support is baffled in many places. Gnada Lee in white face seems completely miscast as a villain, and the catalogue of raw horrors makes one wonder why the revival was conceived. THE FRONT PAGE - Hecht and McArthur's classic newspaper melodrama is still full of lively action and macabre humor. Parts of the dialogue, however, seem more objectionable than ever, and no one rises to the standard once set by Osgood Perkins.

THE ICEMAN COMETH - The four hours set by Eugene O'Neill really don't seem so long, such is his mastery of characterization and slowly mounting crisis. The idea is that man must live by faith, even the derelicts he used to know himself in his unregenerate days. Never has a cast given a dramatist more whole hearted cooperation, and Dudley Digges' performance is something to be remembered. One cannot say, however, that meeting the Iccoman is in any way an agreeable experience. (The vocabulary is unpleasant, but there is no instance of blasphemy.)

ROYALTY REDUCTIONS

To the list of plays published in October's Calendar, on which NCTC group members are entitled to a special royalty reduction, please add the following (No further additions are planned this season.)

Samuel French: MURDER IN A NUNNERY - regular rate: \$25; NCTC, \$20 (1st), \$15 (for succeeding performances).

Dramatic Publishing Co.: BEST FOOT FORWARD; THE GREAT BIG DOORSTEP; A HIGHLAND FLING; THE SONG OF BERNADETTE. Because a sliding scale of royalties applies, no flat rate can be quoted by the publisher; NCTC members, certified by the Service Bureau, will be entitled to a special reduction.

In so far as a program of reduced royalties (money taken from the playwright's

pocket) might seem to some to contradict the Conference's platform of full support to those who supply us with acting material, we are happy to quote Emmet Lavery, an author who has contributed to the list: "I think a lot of good is accomplished by these lists when the standard is high. It exposes people to fine material (and not just cheap material). And since in most cases we don't ask for reduced royalties on the most recent material, I don't think any undue hardship results. Once upon a time I used to argue that Catholic playwrights ought to get more for writing for the Catholic area of interest, but I believe the reduced royalty program, as you administer it, does a lot of good. Incidentally, you certainly have some fine titles in that grouping."

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

Three Plays of Paul Claudel (CRUSTS, THE HOSTAGE, HUMILIATION OF THE FATHER), published by Luce, Boston. Royalty \$25 on each per performance.

STARDUST, Walter Kerr's comedy about a dramatic school (which played for a time as ART AND PRUDENCE) and OUR HEARTS WERE YOUNG AND GAY, the adaptation of Jean Kerr produced first this summer at CU, are published by Dramatic Publishing Co. Royalty \$25 for 1st, \$20 for 2d performance.

RED ROSES FOR ME by Sean O'Casey, the play which caused so much comment on its English production. AND HE HID HIMSELF, a drama of the Italian Resistance by Ignazio Silone.

CREATIVE DRAMATICS, six books on children's Theatre and Creative Dramatics have been added to the library in recent months. KAI KOSRU, volume of plays produced by King-Cobit School, including title play, AUCASSIN AND NICOLETTE, THE TEMPEST, and others. Now out of print. Other out of print, hard to get older plays: DAYS WITHOUT END (O'Neill) and LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM (Trask).

Dramatic Publishing Co. has sent copies of WIND OVER NINETY, JANUARY THAW, WOULD BE GENTLEMAN (ed. Fernand), ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER (ed. Chorpennig)

Other new titles: LATE GEORGE APLEY, BRIGHTEN THE CORNER (H.S. version), YEARS BETWEEN (du Maurier), KISS AND TELL. Plays with new interest: LADY

WINDERMERE'S FAN, SHERLOCK HOLMES, CYRANO DE BERGERAC, ALICE SIT BY THE FIRE.

Among 1-acts: IT'S A SMALL WORLD. FROM 5 TO 5:30, NOVELETTE - all by Philip Johnson for all-girl casts. MENFOLK, THE CHIMNEY CORNER, SANCTUARY, THE NECKLACE IS MINE, SHAM, GHOST IN A GREEN GOWN, and others mentioned in the Bulletin.

For Radio: PRODUCTION OF RELIGIOUS RADIO PROGRAMS by Wm. C. Smith, Radio Director of NCEM, giving practical suggestions to Catholic groups who produce over local stations. Collection of Catholic Theatre of Detroit's radio scripts 1945-46 season. RADIO DRAMA IN ACTION (Eric Barnou's selection of recent broadcasts including INSIDE A KID'S HEAD). Father Kelly's JESUIT MARTYRS OF NORTH AMERICA, HOW COME CHRISTMAS (adaptation of Roarke Bradford's story), and THE BOMBARDIER DIED ON GOOD FRIDAY.

For Christmas: 3 choric adaptations of Father Lynch's A WOMAN WRAPPED IN SILENCE

Mas: LUCIFER AT LARGE, modern morality by Frank Ford which will be published by Baker soon. Written and originally produced at Fordham, the play offers unusual possibilities for music and movement. All male cast. Royalty \$5 if no admission; \$10 with admission. Ms copy in library until publication. THE ANAGNI OUTRAGE by John Duggan, another Fordham alumnus enrolled at CU this year, is pertinent satire on the League of Nations. Also all male. Royalty \$5.

